

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 9636

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 093785

FOLLOWING REPEAT CANBERRA 2682 ACTION SECSTATE INFO JIDDA  
KUWAIT TEHRAN WELLINGTON BRISBANE MELBOUNE PERTH SYDNEY APR 11

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2682

STATE PLEASE PASS AGRICULTURE/FAS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJ: FARMER - MEATWORKERS DISPUTE CONTINUES

REF: CANBERRA 2549

1. AUSTRALIAN WATERSIDE WORKERS (LONGSHOREMEN) AND MEAT  
WORKERS (PACKING HOUSE WORKERS) ARE THREATENING TO PULL  
OFF NATIONWIDE STRIKES IN RETALIATION OF NON-UNION  
(MILITANT FARMERS) LOADING OF LIVE SHEEP TO MIDDLE EAST  
BUYERS IN THE WEST AUSTRALIAN PORT OF ALBANY. THE FARMERS  
ACTION LED TO THE ARREST OF 48 LONGSHOREMEN IN THE PORTS  
OF ALBANY AND FREEMANTLE WHO HAD SET UP PICKET LINES  
IN AN ATTEMPT TO HEAD OFF THE LOADING.

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2. THE MEATWORKERS UNION IS OPPOSING THE EXPORT OF LIVE  
SHEEP BECAUSE IT CLAIMS THIS WILL LEAD TO EVEN MORE  
UNEMPLOYMENT IN AN INDUSTRY WHICH HAS HAD SEVERE CUT-  
BACKS IN RECENT MONTHS. THE UNION IS INSISTING THAT  
AT LEAST TWO SHEEP BE SLAUGHTERED FOR EVERY LIVE ONE  
EXPORTED.

3. THE DISPUTES COMMITTEE OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (A.C.T.U.) HEADED UP BY A.C.T.U. PRESIDENT BOB HAWKE, HAS SCHEDULED AN EMERGENCY MEETING TODAY IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PORT OF ADELAIDE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE AND DETERMINE A.C.T.U. COURSES OF ACTION.

4. THE TRANSPORT WORKERS AND RAILWAY UNION ARE ALSO THREATENING TO GET IN THE ACT WHILE SHEEP SHEARERS WHO BELONG TO THE AUSTRALIAN WORKERS UNION HAVE (SURPRISINGLY) SIDED WITH THE FARMERS.

COMMENT- THE DISPUTE HAS BEEN RECEIVING INTENSIVE NATION WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE. MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS HAS TERMED IT THE MOST DANGEROUS INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE SINCE WORLD WAR II.

5. A.C.T.U. PRESIDENT BOB HAWKE, IN A RECENT CONVERSATION TOLD THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT THE ISSUE IS EXTREMELY COMPLICATED AND HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME.

6. NEW SOUTH WALES A.C.T.U. LEADER JOHN DUCKER, ON APRIL 7, TOLD THE SYDNEY C.G. AND THE EMBASSY'S LABOR ATTACHE AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT THE ISSUE HAS ALL THE INGREDIENTS FOR EXPLOSIVE ACTION; I.E. A UNION HEADED UP BY CONFIDENTIAL

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A WEAK ALCOHOLIC PRESIDENT WITH A NOTORIOUS COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER AS FEDERAL SECRETARY AND A LARGE MELBOURNE LOCAL IN THE HANDS OF AN UNBALANCED C.P. PRESIDENT. THE TRANSPORT WORKERS AND RAILWAY UNION ARE ALSO UNDER CONSIDERABLE C.P. INFLUENCE, WHILE THE FARMERS WHO SEE THEIR MARKET FOR OLD WETHERS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO DEMAND ON THE DOMESTIC MARKET THREATENED, ARE "SPOILING" FOR A FIGHT.

7. FURTHER GRIST FOR THE MILL IS THE FACT THAT WATER-SIDE WORKERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN PULLING OFF "QUICKIE" STOPPAGES IN SUPPORT OF THEIR DEMANDS FOR FULL WAGE INDEXATION AND AGAINST CONTAINERIZATION, WHILE THE SEAMEN'S UNION HAS BEEN UP IN ARMS OVER SHIPMENTS OF EXPORTS IN NON-AUSTRALIAN "BOTTOM"

8. PRIME MINISTER FRASER HAS ALSO BEEN PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE MEATWORKERS TO LIFT THE BANS BLOCKING LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS WORTH A REPORTED \$300 MILLION ANNUALLY. FRASER TOLD THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 10 THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXAMINING SEVERAL AVENUES INCLUDING WIDENING SECTION 45D OF THE TRADE PRACTICES ACT WHICH PROHIBITS

SECONDARY BOYCOTTS, AND EXTENDING THE CONCILIATION AND  
ARBITRATION ACT. ALSTON. UNQUOTE VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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